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Programme planning

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019

Part two: biennial programme plan

Programme 21
International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees

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Overall orientation

21.1 The overall objective of the programme is to ensure international protection to refugees and others of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and to seek permanent solutions to their problems in cooperation with States and other organizations, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance.

21.2 The mandate for the programme is contained in General Assembly resolution 319 A (IV), by which the Assembly established UNHCR as from 1 January 1951, and resolution 428 (V), which sets out the statute of the Office. The Assembly has also called upon the High Commissioner to ensure that refugees returning voluntarily to their countries of origin ("returnees") receive assistance to help sustainable reintegration, as well as to monitor their safety and well-being upon return. UNHCR has also been mandated to address the situation of stateless persons in accordance with the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. UNHCR provides protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons, working in cooperation with the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator or at the specific request of the Secretary-General and with the consent of the State concerned. In its work for internally displaced persons and as part of the collaborative response of the United Nations system to internal displacement, UNHCR has been given lead or co-lead responsibility for protection, emergency shelter and camp management and coordination cluster areas.

21.3 The basic provisions of the UNHCR statute were built upon by the General Assembly in its resolution 832 (IX). Through the adoption by the Assembly of its resolution 58/153 on implementing actions, UNHCR was given a renewed mandate to address the challenge of forced displacement through a mission based on a spirit of solidarity, responsibility and burden-sharing, with an abiding commitment to make the Office a truly multilateral institution.

21.4 The international legal basis for the protection of refugees finds its principal expression in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto and is supplemented by regional instruments, such as the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969 and the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984). The international legal basis for addressing the situation of stateless persons stems from the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. In addition, other international human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), are relevant in providing international protection to refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons, returnees and others of concern.

21.5 The overall strategy for 2018-2019 will cover a range of activities that UNHCR will undertake in cooperation with States and various organizations. It will be guided by the global strategic priorities set by the High Commissioner and incorporate concerted responses to the challenges met by the Office in the previous biennium, including responding to large-scale refugee emergencies, providing protection to persons living outside of camps in urban and rural settings, reinforcing linkages with development actors and engaging in a coordinated response to the problems faced by internally displaced persons. It will contribute to international

efforts to achieve progress against the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

21.6 Notable among the activities to be implemented for 2018-2019 are the following:

(a) Pursuing comprehensive strategies, in cooperation with States and organizations, for achieving durable solutions for refugees and others of concern, while promoting effective protection of displaced persons;

(b) Strengthening the legal regime for international protection, including through the promotion of accessions to international and regional instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees, the effective implementation of refugee rights and the promotion and dissemination of refugee law and protection principles;

(c) Enhancing and reinforcing host country capacity to provide asylum and protection;

(d) Ensuring that UNHCR fully participates in and supports the strengthened collaborative response of the United Nations to situations of internal displacement;

(e) Continuing to develop contingency planning, emergency preparedness and response capabilities, in coordination with other organizations, so as to respond effectively and efficiently to situations of forced displacement;

(f) Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and ensuring that UNHCR and its partners mainstream into all aspects of programme delivery full consideration of the rights of persons of concern, as well as the particular needs and capacities, ascertained through participatory assessments and the age, gender and diversity approach, of refugee women and children, older refugees, refugees with disabilities and other persons with specific needs;

(g) Ensuring the security of refugee camps, settlements and areas of return, as well as the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, and exploring further concrete ways of enhancing the safety and security of UNHCR staff and other humanitarian workers working with refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (giving due consideration to the obligation of United Nations officials to fully observe both the laws and regulations of Member States and their duties and responsibilities to the Organization);

(h) Systematically following up on relevant recommendations in the plans of action emanating from international conferences and involving other humanitarian and development organizations, in the provision of assistance to persons of concern to UNHCR, as well as in the search for durable solutions;

(i) As part of the 10-year campaign to end statelessness (the "I Belong" campaign), advocating the prevention and reduction of statelessness, as well as the protection of stateless persons, by promoting the accession by States to the relevant international instruments and working with States to facilitate the acquisition, reacquisition or confirmation of nationality by stateless persons.

21.7 The programme is under the intergovernmental guidance of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in accordance with its terms of reference, as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1166 (XII). The Executive Committee was formally

established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 672 (XXV) and came into existence on 1 January 1959. Reaffirming the terms of reference laid down by the Assembly, the Council decided that the Executive Committee, being entrusted with the terms of reference set forth in Assembly resolution 1166 (XII), should:

(a) Determine the general policies under which the High Commissioner should plan, develop and administer the programmes and projects required to help solve the problems referred to in its resolution 1166 (XII);

(b) Review at least annually the use of funds made available to the High Commissioner and the programmes and projects being proposed or carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner;

(c) Have authority to make changes in and give final approval for the use of funds and the programmes and projects referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above.

21.8 Although established by the Economic and Social Council, which elects its members, the Executive Committee functions as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and is the key advisory body of UNHCR. The annual cycle of meetings of the Executive Committee consists of one annual plenary session and a number of intersessional meetings of the Standing Committee. Reports on the sessions of the Executive Committee are submitted to the Assembly as addenda to the reports of the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner, who is elected by the Assembly on the nomination of the Secretary-General, provides the overall direction, supervision and management of the activities under this programme. The functions of the High Commissioner are set out in the annex to the statute of UNHCR. The High Commissioner is assisted by a Deputy High Commissioner and by two Assistant High Commissioners, for Protection and for Operations, respectively.

Objective of the Organization: To ensure international protection to refugees and, as applicable, other persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and to achieve durable solutions to their problems in cooperation with States and other organizations, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	*Indicators of achievement*
(a) Improved overall protection environment for refugees and others of concern	(i) Increased number of ratifications of or accessions to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness
	(ii) Increased number of ratifications of or accessions to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009)
	(iii) Increased participation of government and partner staff in learning activities concerning international protection standards

(b) Refugees and others of concern are treated fairly and efficiently when seeking protection, and receive adequate documentation	(i) Increased percentage of refugees and asylum seekers who are registered on an individual basis
	(ii) Increased percentage of refugees and others of concern who receive individual identity and civil documentation
(c) Increased safety from violence and exploitation for refugees and others of concern, especially women and children	(i) Increased number of operations in which support to survivors of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, has improved
	(ii) Number of operations with an increased percentage of unaccompanied and separated children for whom a "best interests" process has been initiated or completed
(d) The basic needs of refugees and others of concern are met and essential services are provided without discrimination and with specific consideration to age, gender and physical condition	(i) Increased number of sites where global acute malnutrition levels meet acceptable standards
	(ii) Increased percentage of households of refugees and others of concern with adequate dwellings
	(iii) Increased number of sites where the mortality rate of children of concern under 5 years of age meets acceptable standards
	(iv) Increased number of operations in which the percentage of refugee children between 6 and 13 years of age enrolled in primary education has improved
(e) Refugees and others of concern, both men and women, participate equally within their communities and their self-reliance is promoted	(i) Increased number of sites where the participation of women in leadership or management structures has improved
	(ii) Increased number of operations implementing comprehensive strategies to promote the self-reliance of refugees and others of concern
(f) Progress in finding durable solutions for refugees supported by sustained international cooperation	(i) Increased number of countries where refugees and others of concern benefit from joint programming on durable solutions between UNHCR and other agencies
	(ii) Increased number of operations where the percentage of persons of concern identified as in need of resettlement submitted for resettlement has been maintained or increased

	(iii) Increased number of operations supporting national authorities with the local integration of refugees
	(iv) Increased voluntary repatriation of refugees, where conditions permit, and their sustainable reintegration in the country of origin
(g) Strengthened emergency-response capacity to meet the needs of refugees and persons of concern	(i) Increased percentage of emergencies in which the first delivery of protection and relief is made within three days of the onset of the emergency
	(ii) Increased number of appropriately trained staff (including partners) deployed to emergencies

Strategy

21.9 The implementation of the programme falls under the overall responsibility of the High Commissioner and is overseen by the Deputy High Commissioner, the Assistant High Commissioners for Protection and Operations, the regional bureaux of UNHCR and the divisions at its headquarters. The Office will continue to strive to further improve accountability, financial and programme control and risk management.

21.10 Further accessions to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, as well as to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, will be promoted. Monitoring of the observance by States of international legal standards for the treatment of refugees, especially the right to seek and enjoy asylum and the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, will contribute to ensuring the effective implementation of refugee rights by the States concerned. This will involve promoting the idea that States should establish fair and efficient procedures for the determination of refugee status and ensure that all persons seeking international protection are granted access to those procedures and mechanisms. UNHCR will also embark on implementing its new approach towards refugee status determination. Continued attention will be given to ensuring that State asylum systems and procedures incorporate an age, gender and diversity perspective. The Office will deliver appropriate training and capacity-building services to support national capacity in building effective asylum systems, including refugee status determination. It will work with Governments to raise awareness of the fact that gender-related forms of persecution and discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons of concern require a concerted protection response and may also be grounds for granting refugee status.

21.11 The Office will encourage States to ensure the protection of refugees and others of concern within broader migration movements. It will also continue to be involved in meeting the challenges posed by irregular maritime movements, improving rescue and disembarkation and ensuring proper reception conditions, the fair treatment of protection claims and international cooperation on sharing

responsibility in providing solutions for those rescued at sea or found as stowaways and who are in need of international protection.

21.12 The promotion and dissemination of refugee law and protection principles, in particular through training of government officials and staff of non-governmental agencies, will be another means of achieving the stated objective. To strengthen international refugee protection, UNHCR will continue to build partnerships and promote collaboration on refugee protection with a wide range of actors, especially from civil society, within the framework of the refugee coordination model. UNHCR will ensure the protection of internally displaced persons and its engagement will be based on the criteria set out in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and undertaken in close collaboration with other entities and agencies concerned.

21.13 UNHCR will undertake concerted interventions to ensure the centrality of protection in humanitarian operations and make further progress in the implementation of global protection strategies. The special protection needs of boys and girls in displacement situations will be carefully analysed and appropriate child-sensitive interventions will be developed in line with the objectives set out in the following three protection strategies on children, education and sexual and gender-based violence: its framework for the protection of children, the 2012-2016 education strategy and its updated strategy for action against sexual and gender-based violence. The strategies will be updated to align them with changing needs and contexts in the future. High priority will also be accorded to devising comprehensive protection interventions to prevent and respond to risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence in line with the action areas developed in the agency's updated strategy. UNHCR will also continue the implementation of its "Beyond detention" strategy, covering the period 2014-2019.

21.14 UNHCR will strive to ensure the optimal alignment of its operational resources with the needs of refugees and others of concern. The Office will continue to build upon the positive results of comprehensive and participatory approaches to planning to ensure that the needs and capacities of men, women and children of concern form the foundation of programme design. This will include the use of standards and indicators across the work of the Office as a means of identifying protection and assistance gaps and of channelling resources to ensure that acceptable standards are met in critical situations. Tools for recording operational data, including demographic, registration and profiling information, situational analysis and planning, will be further enhanced.

21.15 UNHCR will build on the achievements of its global strategy for public health for the period 2014-2018, which provides a comprehensive approach to addressing challenges facing refugees in the areas of public health, HIV and reproductive health, nutrition and food security, and water, sanitation and hygiene. It will seek holistic approaches to settlement and shelter, better linking refugees to development, the economy, services, markets and communities at the local level, in line with its global strategy for settlement and shelter for the period 2014-2018 and its policy on alternatives to camps. It will continue to pursue environmental conservation efforts and the use of renewable energy, drawing on successful practice under its global strategy for safe access to fuel and energy for the period 2014-2018. Programme delivery will benefit from the expanded and systematic use of cash and

cash alternatives as part of the institutionalization by UNHCR of cash-based interventions.

21.16 Finding durable solutions for millions of refugees and internally displaced persons will be central to the programme of work. UNHCR will work with Member States to raise awareness of the dramatic reality of refugees, which requires urgent and durable solutions. The Office will seek opportunities to resolve complex and protracted displacement situations that require comprehensive, and often regional, approaches through voluntary return, and, where appropriate and feasible, through local integration and resettlement. UNHCR will also work with partners to ensure that durable solutions to displacement form part of broader development and peacebuilding agendas. To foster the self-reliance of populations pending solutions, UNHCR will continue to explore opportunities for greater access to employment, including labour mobility, through its global strategy for livelihoods for the period 2014-2018. It will focus on ways to increase the positive economic impact of refugees on host communities, especially by working with development actors and the private sector.

21.17 Effective operational and strategic partnerships will remain a priority for the Office, as a means of enhancing protection, increasing efficiency and strengthening local response capacity. The Office will continue to promote the implementation of its programmes through partners, with special emphasis on supporting national partners. Efforts will continue to strengthen information-management, coordination and support capacity to facilitate predictable and accountable inter-agency engagement.

21.18 The Office will continue to strengthen its emergency preparedness and response capacity, including through strong emergency management and the coordination role of the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply. The focus for 2018-2019 will be on continuing to strengthen senior leadership capacity for emergency operations and the speed and efficiency of delivery of assistance and providing analysis and advice to enable operations in areas in which security risks are present. UNHCR will continue to expand strategic partnerships so as to broaden the capacity and networks of expertise with which to respond to emergencies. It will build on and, where appropriate, improve its emergency and security policies, tools and capacity-building initiatives and training to ensure that its staff and partners are as best equipped as possible.

Legislative mandates

Conventions and conference declarations

1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto

1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons

1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness

Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969

Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25) (1989)

San José Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Persons (1994)

African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009)

General Assembly resolutions

319A (IV)	Refugees and stateless persons
428 (V)	Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
538B (VI)	Assistance and protection of refugees
1166 (XII)	International assistance to refugees within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
50/152	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
58/153	Implementing actions proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to strengthen the capacity of his Office to carry out its mandate
70/134	Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa
70/135	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees